UPTON SINCLAIR'S NEW PLAY

"THE NATUREWOMAN" GIVES HIS IDEAS ON MARRIAGE.

In It a Young Woman of Glowing Health Comes From the South Seas and Startles Boston—Then the Reformer and the Artist Clash in Upton Sinclair.

Upton Sinclair has just published a book called "The Fasting Cure," and he is about to publish one called "Love's Pilgrimage," which deals with a struggle between love and genius. He has also just finished a play, "The Naturewoman," now in the hands of Mr. Belasco, which represents his reaction from intellectualism and spirituality to the cult of physical health.

Mr. Sinclair now glories in health. It is one of his new discoveries, and in the play he impresses upon people the necessity of health, what they must think, feel and do when they have it; what they cannot be when they lack it.

"There can be," says Mr. Sinclair, "no excellence in the world without an abundance of physical health."

"What about John La Farge and Stevenson?"

"As I see La Farge's work it is imitative religiosity both in his paintings and in his stained glass windows. It is beautiful but not vital. Stevenson represents the sick man's reaction against disease. He is the sick man worshipping health.

"My output," continued Mr. Sinclair, "is about a novel a year. 'The Journal of Arthur Sterling' is the best thing I have ever done. It is a spiritual autobiography.

"I have written five plays. 'The Machine' is a play that deals with politics, Tammany Hall politics. 'The Second Story Man' is running now in vaudeville in Newark. It is the story of a burglar who enters a house and confronts the wife of the lawyer who by his cheating and rascality is responsible for his becoming a burglar. The burglar tells the wife his story. Through hearing of her husband's practices she sees how the luxury she enjoys is earned.

"We are all using tainted money, and the worst monopolist in society is the author with his copyright. His ideas are social products nd so should not be copyrighted."

When asked if he would fight copyrighting he replied:

"I will when socialism arrives. When Mr. Rockefeller and Mr. Carnegie are despoiled of their monopolies I am willing to give up mine."

"Do you think socialism will come soon?"

"I am on record as predicting the realization of socialism within the present decade.

"Suffrage? Yes, I believe in suffrage. Also I believe in my heroine, *Oceana*, the naturewoman. I think that the time for such women as *Oceana* will come. It will come sooner than most people think. In a changed economic order woman with respect to man will be the aggressor, because her relation to man is more important to her than man's relation to her is to him.

"Socialism has nothing to do with marriage. Socialism is concerned with the distribution of wealth. The problem of marriage is a question of personality, not a question of property. Unfortunately at present it is a question of property, for the man who marries a woman thinks he owns her.

"There is no attempt to solve by a formula the marriage problem in my play 'The Naturewoman.' There are two sets of formulas employed by people with regard to marriage. There is the class that says 'You must never break marriage' and there is the class that says 'Always break it.' I believe that every person's problem is a separate one. I believe in the importance of love."

"Isn't work more important?" was asked.

"No, not more. I should say that love and work are of equal importance. The improving of the race is greatly important. One of the most important tasks of science is to understand the laws of love and obey them; only as yet we don't dare do so.

"In my play I sacrifice the reformer to the artist. I am pretty sure that *Oceana* will see *Henry* again, but I do not solve the problem. I suggest it. A play that solves the problem soon becomes tiresome."

Mr. Sinclair has been accused of lacking a sense of humor, but he can appreciate a joke on himself. Smiling over the contrast between the climax and the dénouement of "The Naturewoman," he said:

"It's rather funny. First I please the radicals in having *Oceana* run off with *Henry*, then I please the conservatives by having her not take him, and then by leaving the problem up in the air I displease everybody. I'm like the man who carried the donkey across the bridge and pleased nobody and lost the donkey."

The suggestion was made that Mr. Sinclair's play was Shavian, and this led to the question as to the seriousness of Mr. Shaw.

"Mr. Shaw," said Mr. Sinclair, "is the most serious man in England. He is essentially the reformer. He is too much the reformer to be an artist like myself. But in this play I tried to get away from the reformer. I became the artist.

"In 'The Jungle' I did not sacrifice the reformer to the artist; besides 'The Jungle' was never finished. I went all to pieces over it, fell ill, and at the same time had to pause and earn money for a living. The last chapters mean poignant pain to me."

When asked if his reaction against the propagandist zeal of the reformer over the artist carried him as far as art for art's sake Mr. Sinclair replied emphatically:

"I believe in art for humanity's sake. The business of art is to forward the life process, to portray it, interpret it, do all to inspire it. To say 'art for art's sake' is to be like the pianist who would say 'finger gymnastics for sake of my fingers.'"

In speaking of the acting of the play he said:

"For the interpretation of *Oceana* I want an actress of abounding health and joy; I want an actress of clean life. None other could give the right tone to the character of *Oceana*. She is bold, unconventional, wild, but clean as daybreak. She is the superwoman."

"Are you a follower of Nietzsche?"

"I am not a follower of anybody. I am interested in some of Nietzsche's ideas. He is the prophet of evolution. He is the greatest religious teacher for a thousand years. He apprehends the laws of modern science with ecstasy. They become to him religious objects. Darwin and Spencer show how evolution is going; Nietzsche enters into the inside of it and observes it as a moral phenomenon. Nietzsche's theme is that it is the duty of the race to progress.

"When I call *Oceana* an overwoman I mean merely that she is a superior, heroic being, an evolution from us toward perfection."

Oceana is a girl of 22, superbly formed, dark skinned, a picture of glowing health. Mr. Sinclair emphasizes the glowing health. "She is passionate yet controlled. Her actions proceed from a continued overflow of animal health. Her speech proceeds from an overwhelming interest in the truth. She never conceals anything; she never represses anything."

Oceana was brought up in the South Sea Islands by her father, a Bostonian with original ideas as to the education of his daughter. The play opens with *Oceana's* return on her father's death to Boston to her aunt, *Mrs. Masterton*, of the Back Bay, Beacon street.

Mrs. Masterton has three children, *Ethel*, *Freddy*, who promptly falls in love with *Oceana*, and *Letitia*, always exhausted, who is the wife of *Henry Selden*.

Henry Selden is a big, active man who wants something to do. He is a lawyer, but is restless and discontented, wants to live an outdoor life, the life of a day laborer, and wants to live in the country. To all of this his wife objects.

Oceana's first appearance in Beacon street is "in short skirt and a rough sailor's reefer with cap to match; underneath this a knitted garment, tight fitting and soft—no corsets. She carries two extremely heavy suit cases with no apparent effort." To the shocked *Mastertons* *Oceana* describes her first plunge into civilization as "horrible."

"All Bostonians," she says, "wear corsets on their minds and souls."

"My father," she said in the course of explaining herself to her relatives, "taught me to face the facts of my being. 'Life is a battle,' he would say, 'you grapple with destruction every hour. And only one thing can save you—to know! You must be alive, alert, trained like a gymnast; you must be swift, impatient, hot for reality; you must seize the white hot iron of life and shape it to your will.'"

When *Freddy* declares his love to her she points out the importance of marriage to woman in her view, more important to the woman than to the man.

"Let us," says she, "talk of love. Realize how much more serious a thought it is to a woman than it is to a man. A man meets a woman and he finds her beautiful and he says 'I adore you,' and she gives herself to him and then he goes off and forgets all about it.

"But the woman, she doesn't forget. She carries a reminder. And it's not only that she has the burden of the child, the anguish of the birth, the duty of suckling and rearing it. It's that she has a miniature of that man with her all the rest of her days. And so, don't you see how careful she has to be, how desperately important the thing is to her? She has to be sure that he is the mate, not only of her body but also of her mind and of her soul.

"I have never been in love, Freddy, but some day I shall feel it, and when I do I shall take that man as if before a court of judgment. I shall take him away with me. I shall ask myself not merely, 'Is he beautiful of body?' but 'Is he beautiful and strong in soul?'

"And mind you, I would not exact pledges of him. I would say to him, 'I do not ask you to take care of me; I do not ask you to take care of my child. You may go away if you wish, that rests with you; but I wish the child.'"

At an entertainment given by her aunt *Oceana* dances, in a filmy native costume, the "Sunrise Dance," to her aunt's horror, but somewhat to *Henry Selden's* gratification. *Oceana* interprets for them the meaning of this South Sea Island dance and incidentally reveals more of her ideas about life:

"It represents worship. It portrays an awakening from slumber and a prayer to the Sun God. Gradually I rise to my feet and gaze toward the light, and there is the sun shining upon the waves of the sea and upon the palm branches. All life is awakening and singing for joy, and so it rises to an ecstasy."

A little later in the scene *Oceana* says: "You see, I have a conviction that there is nothing beautiful or right about sorrow." She refused either to wear mourning or to mourn for her father. "We call ourselves worshippers of nature. And nature always means happiness. If anything goes wrong, it is because you have violated a law. It is always your fault, never nature's."

"Death is one of the laws of our being, and if we fear it, is not that because our thought is wrong?"

She plays singlestick with *Henry* and during the game discovers that she loves *Henry*. She cries:

"Wake up, man, wake up! You've only one life to live. You act as if you had a thousand."

His family remind her that he is married. She exclaims: "Married, married! That is the sorcery with which you bind him! They mumble their incantations over you, the spell is done, and you sink back, cowed and whimpering. You are a machine, a domestic utensil. Bread and butter and cooks and dinner parties, and billiards and bridge whist, that is your portion. A married man!"

Oceana takes *Henry* away. Act IV. takes place at *Henry Selden's* camp in the White Mountains on an afternoon a week later. To *Letitia*, for whom she had sent, *Oceana* explains her motives.

"What chance," she asks, "have a man and a woman to get acquainted with each other in the conventional world?

"I wished to try him out, in body, mind and soul. I wished to know if he was the man for me.

"The reason I have sent for you is to assure myself on two points, first as to whether your husband still loves you; second, as to whether you still love him.

"You see, *Letitia*, the times have changed. In the beginning a woman was man's economic dependent; but now that the man has become ashamed of that, he is the woman's spiritual dependent. You play upon his sense of chivalry, his sympathy, his pity; and you prey upon him, you devour him alive. But the time has come when that must cease, *Letitia*; a man will not always be a domestic appanage."

Letitia asks her is she is not afraid. She replies:

"We are not afraid of man or devil."

"Nor of God?" asks *Letitia*.

"We have our own connections with God, my dear; by private wire, so to speak."

Letitia then brings in the thought of the children. She appeals to *Henry's* fatherhood and also declares that she loves him.

Oceana says: "Marriage is a monopoly; competition's done away with, and stagnation is left." She adds that "the curse of the thing you call marriage is that you can treat one another as you please, because you know the law and the conventions will hold you together."

Henry goes away with *Letitia*. *Oceana* is stung with regret for letting him go. Overcome by grief, she returns to her island in the South Seas.

UPTON SINCLAIR. MR. SINCLAIR'S EXPRESSION AS SHOWN IN SMALL PHOTOGRAPH USED TO BE CALLED "SPIRITUAL." SYSTEMATIC FASTING HAS EVOLVED THE ATHLETIC FIGURE IN A SWEATER.

AUTHORS AND THEIR WORK.

Mary Proctor, author of "Half Hours with the Summer Stars," is a daughter of the late Richard A. Proctor, who did much to popularize the study of stars in his lifetime. Many of these chapters appeared in a Chicago daily paper, and were written after Miss Proctor had made a prolonged visit to the Yerkes observatory, the home of the celebrated forty inch refractor.

The publication of "The Catspaw," William Hamilton Osborne's new novel, comes exactly nine years after he began his literary side practice. By profession he is a lawyer in New Jersey and New York, with an experience extending over sixteen years. During his nine years side practice he has published 450 short stories, besides three long novels. His activity is shown by his using the morning of the Lincoln's Birthday holiday to run off a couple of short stories and often he has averaged a story a night for several weeks. He wrote the novel "The Red Mouse" in ten sittings within one month, and the novel "The Running Fight" in twelve sittings within the same space of time.

Florida Pope Sumerwell, author of "Four in Family," believes that not one brought up on a farm does not really know the fun of being a child. She was brought up on a large stock farm in Texas, and to young persons who complain of the tedium of school hours she recommends a field of waving grain. For there, even when your truancy is discovered, you can so double and turn on the enemy—a small darky—that you are pretty sure of safety, unless prudence lends ears to listen to the warning:

"You Miss Floddie, you better come right home, kase your maw is going ter plum blister your hide offen you if you don't."

At nine she went to school in Austin, riding her own pony, with her next older brother behind. It humiliated him so she would always slow down before reaching school so that he could jump off and stroll up like one who had walked all the way.

Herman Whitaker, author of "The Planter," a book which discusses among other things the causes of the present disturbances in Mexico, is one of the group of young American writers who gained their knowledge of Mexican conditions at first hand. He became so enthusiastic a supporter of the cause for which the insurrectos have now taken the field that his life was threatened more than once while he was in the zone of contention.

William Farquhar Payson, author of "Periwinkle," is now in New York, where he and Mrs. Payson will remain until May, when they go abroad for a stay in London and in Paris.

Mrs. George Haven Putnam (Emily James), author of "The Lady," will spend part of the summer in London.

Anne Warwick, whose novel "Compensation" has just been published by the John Lane Company, is at present in Nice, and plans to spend the early spring in Italy before starting on a motor tour. Anne Warwick is but the pen name of the daughter of a man well known in Washington, his home, and other cities of the country, and she preferred to publish her first novel under a pseudonym.

Marjorie Patterson, whose first novel, "Fortunata," is a Baltimore girl scarcely out of her 'teens, who inherits her literary talent from ancestors both Northern and Southern. One grandfather was John Neal of Portland, Me., friend of Longfellow and Emerson. A grandaunt was Betty Patterson, who married Jerome Bonaparte. Miss Patterson has lived much abroad, and with her mother is spending the spring in Italy, where the scene of "Fortunata" is laid.

Ralph D. Paine, author of "Ships and Sailors of Old Salem," is now in New York on a double errand. He is conferring with his publishers, Strugis & Walton Company, in regard to his new book of treasure troves, "The Book of Buried Treasure," and he wishes to be present at the first performance of a one act play of his now running in one of the New York vaudeville theatres.

Dallas Lou Sharp is an admirer of John Burroughs, as an extract from his collection of essays just published by Houghton Mifflin Company evidences:

"Others have written of nature with as much love and truth as has Mr. Burroughs and each with his own peculiar charm: Audubon, with the spell of wild places and the thrill of fresh wonder; Traherne, with the ecstasy of the religious mystic; Gilbert White, with the sweetness of the evening and the morning; Thoreau, with the heat of noonday; Jefferies, with just a touch of twilight shadowing all his pages. * * * Take Mr. Burroughs as a whole, and it is beyond dispute the most complete, the most revealing of all our outdoor literature."

Zane Grey, who started with his young brother on a trip which was to end with a big game hunt in the Tamaulipas jungle of Mexico, has turned back. The novelist was able to go no further than Tampico, on the Gulf of Mexico, because of the uncertainty of conditions in the interior. Mr. Grey had hoped to gather material with his brother for a book continuing the adventures of Ken Ward, the hero of "The Young Pitcher."

Will Lillibridge, the novelist who died recently and whose posthumous volume of stories, "A Breath of Prairie," is to be issued immediately by A. C. McClurg & Co., was 31 at the time of his death. He had five novels to his credit, as well as a large number of short stories and magazine articles. He spent six years in the collegiate, dental and medical departments of the State University of Iowa and he did all his writing evenings after he had settled down to a busy dental practice in Sioux Falls. Each fall he left town and lived in primitive fashion on the prairies that he loved.

Irving Bacheller, whose new novel, "Keeping Up with Lizzie," has just been published, has gone to Beaufort, N. C.

"I am invited to go sailing every day," writes Mr. Bacheller, "and about the only outdoor sport I do not like is sailing. Some of my folks in 'Keeping Up with Lizzie' must be laughing up their sleeves some of those that I made a bit uncomfortable, I fear."

The "folks" were uncomfortable trying to keep up with constantly increasing extravagance.

Ripley D. Saunders, author of "Colonel Todhunter of Missouri," is a Southerner, born in Ripley, Miss., in 1856. At 18 he became clerk in the cotton business, but shortly afterward went into newspaper work. He has been associated for many years with the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*, of which paper he is the dramatic critic. His latest novel, "Colonel Todhunter of Missouri," is a story of Missouri life and character. The original of Col. Todhunter is an old Kentucky-Missourian now living on a farm near Glencoe, Mo., an unterrified Democrat of that fibre best produced by a blend of Kentucky and Missouri.

THE DOUBLE B OF SUCCESS

THAT COMBINATION IN THREE OF LOUIS J. VANCE'S BOOKS.

Before Finding It, Though, He Had Worked Himself Out of a Telephone Office Into Romance—A Novel on New Lines—At Work on a Play of Action.

Amid signs of travel and of his recent arrival—trunks, bags, &c.—Louis Joseph Vance, romancer, sat in his hotel sitting-room and told how beautiful Bermuda was when he left it. In fact that is the reason he left, for Bermuda gets so beautiful at just this season of the year and attracts so many diverting visitors and lends itself so easily to diversions of various kinds that it is no place for a hard pressed author with a book and a play on hand at one and the same time.

"So I fled to Forty-second and Broadway; I needed a nice, quiet nook," explained the romancer.

Incidentally, like most good diplomats who don't look like diplomats, and most good detectives who don't look like detectives, this follower of the art would never be recognized in a crowd as a romancer. He bears none of the earmarks of mystery or adventure or the other stage properties in his personal makeup.

His bright brown eyes beam good nature behind their black rimmed glasses, and his reddish hair vies with them in beaming. He is even given to rotundity. The only possible earmark was the exact match of the stone in his scarfpin and his violet silk tie; but even such occurrences as that are often accidental and really mean nothing.

Lovers of the melodramatic form of fiction in which events hurry the characters rapidly from one turn to another may be disappointed to learn that Mr. Vance's new novel emphasizes character over plot. And the author is evidently vastly pleased with the new attempt.

"It's the first work I've ever had any occasion to take any pride in," he said modestly. "And I am a bit proud of 'Cynthia of the Minute.' It has some real people in it."

"'Cynthia of the Minute'?"

"Yes, 'Cynthia of the Minute.' Isn't that a good title?"

"But it's so obscure. It makes one wonder what it means."

"That's why it's a good title," said the author. "I got it out of a book of synonyms. I was looking for a synonym for changeling, and I found this old phrase—something like Polly-change-her-mind, you know. As my heroine's name is Cynthia I took over the phrase. The story is about one-third in New York and two-thirds a cruise ending at Bermuda."

"Really ground that you've travelled over this time, Mr. Vance?"

The romancer blushed, and very appropriately. He protested against the general accusation, however.

"I also knew from observation the ground of 'The Black Bag,' which was placed in England," he said.

"But how about 'The Bronze Bell'?"

He sat convicted.

"I read over fifty books on India to write that," he said, and in doing so he admitted one of the chief elements of the romancer's art, familiarizing oneself with a remote country until it becomes so real that it can be made real to the reader also.

The depicted country lives, breathes and is vital, and whether it bears exact resemblance to the real country is not much concern to the romancer. Mr. Vance told how "The Bronze Bell," laid in India, came to be.

"I saw 'The Prince of India' on the stage," he said, "and was much impressed by the scene of the gateway of swords. So was Bob Davis of *Munsey's*, and he suggested a story in which a political society should have as a final ordeal of initiation a similar passing under the touching sword edges.

"He was for laying it in the Balkan States, but the idea of India clung in my mind and I started reading up on it. A member of the Dodd Mead Company to whom I submitted the story and who had visited India said that I got that one down pat.

"I wrote 'The Brass Bowl' after I had returned from a year in England, strapped. Authors when strapped always go to work, and I looked around and unearthed a 10,000 word short story. I thought I might enlarge it and make enough out of it to tide me over.

"I worked on it for fourteen days, and then thought it was rotten enough for some one to buy it. Some one did. And I've never had to work since, really had to work. To my utter amazement and infinite delight 'The Brass Bowl' made such a go as I've never been able to understand.

"Double Bs seem to be lucky for you—'The Brass Bowl,' 'The Black Bag,' the Bronze Bell.' Were they all premeditated?"

"No and yes," he answered truthfully. "'The Brass Bowl' was named without any such malice aforethought. 'The Black Bag' may have had a little mixed in, but the title fitted anyway. But as for 'The Bronze Bell,' I'll frankly admit the title of that was shamelessly and brazenly dragged in to match up with the other successful Bs. But I didn't have much to do with that little advertising game."

Mr. Vance was not always a romancer, that is by profession. At 15 he was employed in the treasurer's office of a telephone company, at 18 he was married and at 20 he was the father of a son and casting about for a source of enlarging his income. As often happens, writing appeared to him to be the easiest way out of difficulties.

"I started on my literary career by writing from 8 o'clock at night until 2 in the morning," he said. "During the day from 9 until 5 I was busy in the office. The first two stories I wrote were printed, and they were horrible.

"After that came a long blank of not getting things accepted. Then I wrote what I think is the most terrible thing in the world, a novel dealing with Central American filibustering. It was 100,000 words long and I got $500 for it. But I was lucky at that; the money ought to have gone the other way.

"But that $500 was enough to make a determined writer of me. From that moment in my own mind I was an author.

"Then I began to produce enormously. The *Popular Magazine* started, to which I contributed under seven names at once. For the first number I wrote about two-thirds of the stories, and over one-half of them all during its first year."

The author's imagination works best when he is stretched out flat on his back and half asleep.

"Kid yourself along," is his prescription for stimulating the imagination.

"The worst part of it with me, though," he complained, "is that my wife can never realize that I'm working unless I'm pounding the typewriter. She thinks I'm indulging in laziness instead of building up beautiful themes.

"'Here, get up and go to work!' she commands. And up I have to get, regardless of protests over sustaining my frame of mind."

Like most other novelists who have become enamored of royalties, Mr. Vance has been stung by the playwriting bee. Once he wrote a little melodramatic sketch in one night's sitting, and has been drawing $50 a week for it nearly ever since. Considering that a profitable night's work, he would like to enlarge upon it, and is at present collaborating with Roy Cooper McGrew in writing a play "with plenty of action in it." He is also at work on a dramatization of one of Maurice Hewlett's novels, for the success of which he has high hopes.

Maeterlinck as a Smoker.

It is doubtful whether the confirmed smoker ever really enjoys smoking. The habit becomes merely mechanical. M. Maeterlinck has hit upon an expedient whereby he continues to enjoy the pleasure of his pipe and at the same time guard against its injurious effects. He is, it appears, a slave to the habit.

"Without the help of tobacco," writes a recent biographer, "he seemed incapable of receiving inspiration or crystallizing it in words. If he has not overcome the need he has outflanked it.

"Smoking, he noticed, had lost its virtue as a stimulant and instead of rousing the brain to activity as at first, had come to disturb its functions; so now, in lieu of ordinary tobacco he fills his bowl with a denicotined preparation, tasteless indeed, but harmless. His pipe is still always alight when the pen is busy, but it is hardly now more than an innocent subterfuge intended to cheat and so satisfy an irresistible mechanical craving, "some years now been a mere track.

Ruskin's Road at Oxford.

From the Autocar.

A melancholy memorial of the public spirited kind of road making is a lane branching off the Seven Bridges road from Oxford. It is called Ruskin's road and was the scene of a ludicrous experiment made at the instigation of the sage.

When he was at Oxford he persistently urged that all power should have fruitful results and in the end so impressed some of his friends that they determined to expend on a vile by-way leading from the Seven Bridges road toward Hinksey Ferry the energy that they had till then dissipated on cricket, tennis and the like. Delighted with this resolve, Ruskin, after bestowing on them his benediction, purchased picks and shovels and as a further preliminary took lessons in the art or mystery of stone breaking—an art which, however, he never personally practised. The undergraduates "constructed" their road of dirt without any foundation whatever and it has for some years now been a mere track.